

Message Text

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ACTION EA-12

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SUBJECT: U.S. RELATIONS WITH NAURU

REF: CANBERRA 5300

1. SUMMARY: U. S. RELATIONS WITH NAURU ARE BEGINNING TO
SUFFER BOTH FROM NEGLECT ON THE U.S. SIDE AND THE BELIEF
THAT THE U.S. IS, FOR REASONS NOT CLEAR TO THE NAURU
GOVERNMENT, BEGINNING TO PENALIZE NAURU FOR A U.S. PRE-
OCCUPATION WITH AN ISSUE THEY FEEL POWERLESS TO RESOLVE.
END SUMMARY.

2. ON THREE RECENT OCCASIONS, THE U.S. HAS SOUGHT TO DEAL
WITH THE GOVERNMENT OF NAURU IN CIRCUMSTANCES WHICH HAVE
LEFT THE GON WITH AMBIVALENT FEELINGS ABOUT THEIR TIES WITH
THE U.S. NAURU IS A SMALL BUT FRIENDLY INDEPENDENT ISLAND-
STATE WHICH WISHES A FRIENDLY, CORDIAL RELATIONSHIP WITH US,
AND WITH WHICH WE WOULD LIKE TO HAVE WARM BUT RELATIVELY
UNINVOLVED RELATIONS. AS A PRACTICAL MATTER, UNABLE TO
SUPPORT DIPLOMATIC MISSIONS OF ITS OWN OVERSEAS BECAUSE OF
THEIR COST, NAURU HAS ELECTED TO CONDUCT ITS
DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS THROUGH ITS DIPLOMATIC AND CON-
SULAR AGENTS IN AUSTRALIA. THE U.S. AMBASSADOR IN
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AUSTRALIA HAS FOR SIMILAR REASONS ON THE U.S. SIDE,
TRADITIONALLY BEEN ACCREDITED TO THE GOVERNMENT OF NAURU.

3. FOR THE PAST YEAR AND A HALF, HOWEVER, ACCREDITATION
OF THE CURRENT U.S. AMBASSADOR IN AUSTRALIA HAS BEEN HELD
UP FOR REASONS WHICH, ALTHOUGH THEY HAVE BEEN EXPLAINED
AS TACTFULLY AS POSSIBLE TO THE GON, THE LATTER ARE

BEGINNING TO FIND A BIT THIN.

4. IN THE MEANTIME HOWEVER, WE HAVE HAD TO CONTINUE DEALING WITH THE GON IN THE FURTHERANCE OF OUR OWN NATIONAL POLICY INTERESTS. THUS WE HAVE APPROACHED THE GON FOR HELP WITH PROPOSED VISITS BY U.S. NAVY SHIPS (A VISIT BY THE GUIDED MISSILE CRUISER U.S.S. HORNE IS CURRENTLY SCHEDULED FOR SEPTEMBER 9-11) INCLUDING WAIVER OF TAXES, LEVIES, AND OTHER "STATE CHARGES" WHICH ARE NORMALLY NOT ASSESSED AGAINST "SOVEREIGN VESSELS." EMBASSY ALSO HAS BEEN PASSING DIPLOMATIC NOTES FROM THE DEPARTMENT TO THE GON CONCERNING A NUMBER OF MATTERS OF INTEREST TO US, INCLUDING THE CONVENTION ON ANTI-HIJACKING OF AIRCRAFT, AND ICAO ACCESSION, AND VARIOUS OTHERS OF A MULTILATERAL, INTERNATIONAL NATURE.

5. ALTHOUGH WE CAN DO ALL OF THIS AS A MATTER OF COURSE THROUGH THE NAURUAN CONSULATE GENERAL IN MELBOURNE, OUR DEALINGS WITH THE GON ARE BEGINNING TO RUN UP AGAINST A FAINTLY HURT, PUZZLED WONDERMENT ABOUT OUR INTENTIONS. FRENCH AMBASSADOR GUEURY, ACCREDITED TO NAURU AND RESIDENT IN WELLINGTON, TOLD AMBASSADOR SELDEN TWO WEEKS AGO THAT WHEN HE PAID HIS FIRST OFFICIAL VISIT TO NAURU HE WAS GIVEN A LIST OF ENVOYS ACCREDITED THERE, AND NOTICED THE ABSENCE OF THE AMERICAN AMBASSADOR. INQUIRING, HE WAS TOLD BY SENIOR GON OFFICIALS THAT LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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ALTHOUGH THE AMERICAN AMBASSADOR IN AUSTRALIA WAS NORMALLY ACCREDITED TO NAURU, THE INCUMBENT HAD BEEN IN AUSTRALIA FOR OVER A YEAR AND THEY HAD STILL HAD NO WORD FROM US ABOUT OUR INTENTIONS.

6. THE PROBLEM OF WHETHER MINI-STATES CAN AFFORD TO MAINTAIN COSTLY DIPLOMATIC REPRESENTATION IN THE U.S. IS ONE WHICH HAS BEEN AIRE IN THE PAST. THE POSITION OF THE GON WITH RESPECT TO ACCREDITATION OF REPRESENTATIVES TO THE U.S. IS ONE WHICH STRIKES US AS UNCOMMONLY SENSIBLE AND REASONABLE IN VIEW OF THE DEMANDS ON NAURU'S LIMITED RESOURCES. WE WOULD HOPE THAT THOSE IN CONGRESS WHO BELIEVE THAT DIPLOMATIC REPRESENTATION SHOULD BE RECIPROCAL MIGHT BE ABLE TO ACCEPT THE POSITION OF A SMALL COUNTRY LIKE NAURU WHICH WANTS FRIENDLY PRODUCTIVE RELATIONS WITH THE UNITED STATES, BUT BELIEVES IT WOULD BE ABDICATING IN ITS DUTY TO ITS PEOPLE IF IT WERE TO SQUANDER ITS LIMITED RESOURCES (IN THIS CASE, \$8.8,8 #8,& 43 34;3 9* &7-,9...) ON UNNECESSARY LUXUIRIES LIKE AN EMBASSY AND AMBASSADOR IN WASHINGTON. IS IT REALLY IN OUR NATIONAL POLICY INTERESTS TO INSIST THAT EACH OF THE MANY POTENTIAL INDEPENDENT ISLAND-STATES IN THE SOUTHWEST PACIFIC TRY TO EMULATE THE BIG POWERS

IN THIS RESPECT? IF CANNOT FAIL TO APPEAR TO PEOPLE
IN THIS REGION THAT THIS IS A NEEDLESS COMPLICATION IN
OUR DEVELOPING RELATIONSHIP WITH THIS REGION, WHICH WE
HAVE REPEATEDLY SAID IS IMPORTANT TO US AS OUR OWN TIES
WITH MICRONESIA AND ITS NEIGHBORS EVOLVE, THAT COULD BE
AVOIDED OR AMELIORATED WITH A LITTLE INEXPENSIVE UNDER-
STANDING AND GOOD WILL -- AT VIRTUALLY NO COST TO THE U.S.

7. ACTION REQUESTED: WE REALIZE THAT IN THE TOTAL CON-
STELLATION OF U.S. PRIORITIES, RELATIONS WITH NAURU DOES
NOT LOOM PARTICULARLY LARGE, AND WE ARE THEREFORE RELUCTANT
TO ASK THE DEPARTMENT TO DIVERT ITS OWN HARD-PRESSED
RESOURCES TOWARD THIS ISSUE. WE BELIEVE, HOWEVER, THAT
DEPT SHOULD AT LEAST BE AWARE THAT THIS MATTER, WHICH
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HAS DRAGGED ON NOW FOR OVER A YEAR, IS BEGINNING TO COMPLI-
CATE OUR DEALINGS WITH THE GON WHICH HAVE HAD TO GO ON
NEVERTHELESS. THE ISSUE IS HIGHLY LIKELY TO ARISE DURING
THE FORTHCOMING VISIT OF THE U.S.S. HORNE, AND WE DOUBT
THAT THE COMMANDING OFFICER OF THAT SHIP, USN CAPT. JAMES
A. BARBER, JR., WILL BE ABLE TO PUT A VERY CONVINCING
EXPLANATION TO GON OFFICIALS WHO HE IS HOSTING FOR LUNCHEON
ABOARD HIS SHIP AND WHO WILL ALMOST CERTAINLY ASK HIM
ABOUT IT. WE HOPE THE DEPARTMENT WILL OKKO FOR AN
OPPORTUNITY TO MAKE SOME OF THE ABOVE POINTS WITH
INDIVIDUAL SENATORS, IN THE OPE THAT SOME PROGRESS
MIGHT BE MADE ON THE MATTER IN THE NOT TOO DISTANT
FUTURE.

8. DEPT MAY DECONTROL IF IT WISHES.
ALSTON

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